**MINUTES**

**President's Council on Sustainability**

Meeting of February 16th, 2024 3pm

**Present:** Mary Becelia,Eric Bonds, Kevin Caffrey, Avery Duncan, Lia Fowler, Carson Giocondo, Brian Gorham, Alan Griffith, Pamela Grothe, Jeremy Larochelle, Brian Ogle, Lauren Pilcher, Kate Stoneman, Sushma Subramanian, Suzanne Sumner

**Guests**: Brian Gorham, Executive Director of Facilities Operations; Amira Said, Campus Community Composting

1. **Welcome Back**Pam welcomed everyone back from the break and is excited about new opportunities this semester.
2. **Member Announcements/General Updates**

Eric mentioned the [Youth Climate Action Conference](https://www.facebook.com/events/287796587577215/?acontext=%7B%22event_action_history%22%3A%5b%5d%7D) taking place at UMW on Sunday 2/25 and encouraged everyone to attend/spread the word/bring a friend.

Jeremy promoted the [Wild & Scenic Film Festival](https://wildandscenicfilmfestival.org/events/friends-of-the-rappahannock-22-2-2/) 3/16. Volunteer opportunities still available. Sustainability Office will be represented.

Pam mentioned the Sustainability Position is now being finalized to review the 16 applicants. Holly, Pam, Kevin, and Brian G. are on the search committee.

Pam was approached by Dr. Andrew Dolby (Biology) about a potential “Sustainability Design Center” to bring faculty together across different disciplines to think about ideas to create more curriculum opportunities. Pam mentioned a physical location (Eagle Lake Outpost) that could potentially serve a physical location for this center. This type of project/initiative ties into the educational aspect of the Climate Action Plan (CAP)

Suzanne mentioned 10-Year planning committee and she is serving on the space between building subcommittee and IT subcommittees. She encouraged PCS members to bring ideas to her that anyone may have in these areas. There will be a 2/21 meeting on climate action plan and PCS’ work.

1. **Guest: Brian Gorham, Executive Director of Facilities Operations**Brian provided an overview of the recent ESCO work. Facilities went through the process to put together a Request for Proposal (RFP), inviting vendors, and deciding to go with Schneider Electric who have done a mid-term project evaluation. Brian discussed the payback savings aspect of decisions to be made. We’re currently at the point of deciding which project we will go with moving forward. Brian talked about how to fund this project, and taking on debt to take on the project. Even though we don’t have a lot of cap, this project is still considered a sound project to pursue. These projects may not be visible, but come to fruition with lower energy building, more reliable, advantageous, and strategic lighting, improved air quality, etc.

A big motivating aspect of this project has been installing solar panels at UMW. Brian mentioned the life cycle involved with solar panels and why it’s important to be cautious in the procurement of solar panels and the best utilization on campus. Brian also mentioned the aspect of creating a maintenance fund for solar panels to build into the plan. Solar Panels focus on longevity vs. short-term impact. Brian commended the PCS for our impact on moving this process along.

Suzanne asked about timeline for decision. Brian confirmed they’ve ultimately decided on one of the projects (Project #2) – not solidified yet but should have another update soon.

Pam asked about building(s) efficiency that are not included in the 10-building plan Schneider proposed. Brian did not rule out this plan being adapted if it’s the one UMW goes with. Brian confirmed they’ve started to do this, going through all of their work orders to determine the greatest issues. They are going to look at every single building to assess each building’s envelope to pursue funding/fix. Brian discussed the status/situation with Monroe as an example. His goal is to put a system in place to find these issues.

Eric mentioned the obvious issues (cracks of doors) as well to investigate that may be systemic across the university. Brian agreed and it his mission to investigate/address these things and finding the root cause of issues.

Jeremy asked about potential for Monroe to reopen by this fall. Brian has hopes it will, but it is undetermined at this point.

Eric asked if we can do anything as PCS to help bring renewable energy to campus. Brian: advocacy. He feels we’re this far along in the process because of the ideas we’ve brought to administration.

Further discussion ensued on HVAC issues on campus and encouraging work orders to be placed when issues arise.

Eric thanked Brian on behalf of all of PCS how excited we are. Pam confirmed we’ve supported this and we will share the plan with the group.

1. **Guest: Amira Said, Campus Community Composting**

Community composting: Working with Katora to obtain coffee grounds. Would like to get food scraps from departments and have students bring their own. Amira is working with COAR to advertise. Will be tabling at Climate Conference and film festival. Food scraps can be brought to the pollinator garden.

Amira has been talking with Holly and looking at other institutions for campus wide composting. Alan asked about locations for a compost area outside of the CRUC. Amira has talked with Rose Benedict (Campus Dining) about pre-consumed food waste and maybe starting slowly and then increasing. Long term ideal plan: a project for on-campus with a garden. Pam mentioned having Amira back in April for an update on this work.

Eric mentioned possibility of sending out an email for collection from departments to compost correctly. Mary mentioned Botany’s tabling success and potentially partnering with them. Bee Club, Garden Club, etc. to raise awareness/form partnerships/gain a wider audience of the composting work/initiatives.

1. **Climate Action Plan Updates**

Alan explained they are trying to get a final draft that the President can take to BOV in April. The copy was distributed, comments were received (concerned with cost questions and can we push the dates (2035) back). We have all the cost estimates we need and Jeff McClurken (President’s Office) wants us to add those numbers to the plan should questions of cost come up when the plan goes before the BOV. Alan thinks the PCS should have discussions about this. Pam brought up creating an ad hoc committee to decide on these dates and then we could bring that to the PCS at our 3/14 meeting to approve. A small committee will review the dates to consider the ramifications of moving the dates or keeping as is. We’ll put a call for volunteers when we send the minutes.

Eric mentioned price concerns and opportunity for grants to support implementation.

Discussion took place on the changing of the dates in the CAP and prospect of sticking with what we have.

1. **Subcommittee Updates**
   1. **Construction and Operations** – Shortly before the winter break, Eric brought to our attention the work that FXBG City Schools has done with solar arrays on three of their school buildings which prompted us to reach out to the President’s Office, Facilities, Finance, Procurement, and also Dr. Christine Henry in Historic Preservation to discuss moving forward with solar panels at UMW since they are part of the CAP and fall under one of the “visible and impactful” actions for energy savings. We set a meeting date of January 12th and then that same week Schneider Electric presented their campus solar plan so they were able to attend our meeting as well and provide more details on solar panel installations on campus. Alan, Eric, Pam, and myself were at the meeting and gained a good sense of what Schneider Electric could do. Jeff McClurken and all others in the meeting seemed supportive and interested in pursuing this endeavor.
   2. **Sustainability Culture on Campus** – Cookie Table during Finals Week to promote sustainability
   3. **Research and Curriculum –** this group has not met yet this semester, has not met yet but will set up a meeting soon
2. **Other Announcements**

Formation of a “Sustainable Swap” – clothes exchange to bring this issue to others’ attention.

1. **Adjournment**Meeting adjourned at 4:14pm

Next Meeting: Thursday March 14th 3-4pm HCC 210 and via Zoom